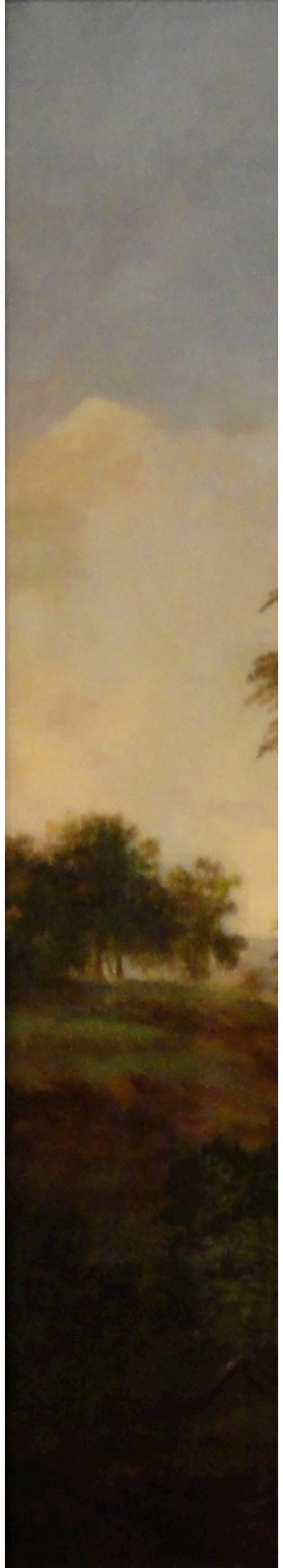
AMERICAN ROMANTICS

Premiere Recordings of Turn of the Century Works for String Orchestra

GOWANUS ARTS ENSEMBLE & REUBEN BLUNDELL, CONDUCTOR



These premiere recordings promote music by immigrant and homegrown composers, from the rich but underperformed music of the late 19th and 20th century. It's striking to hear a European Romantic style alongside a homegrown aesthetic, whether the New England styles of Foote, Parker and Converse, or Busch's incorporation of Native American themes. These composers were born in the USA, France, Germany, Switzerland and Denmark, and were citizens of, or resident in America during this period.

CARL BUSCH (1862-1943)

❶ *Omaha Indian Love Song* FROM *Four North American Legends* | 6:08

PAUL MIERSCH (1868-1956)

❷ *Pleasant memories (Gais Souvenirs)—Pizzicato Caprice pour Instruments à cordes* | 2:06

LUDWIG BONVIN (1850-1939)

❸ *Christmas Night's Dream (Christnachtstraum), Op. 10* | 4:22

CARL HILLMAN (1867-1955)

❹ *Lullaby (Wiegenlied), Op. 21* | 2:21

HORATIO PARKER (1863-1919)

❺ *Scherzo, for Strings* | 5:15

CARL BUSCH (1862-1943)

❻ *Chippewa Lullaby* FROM *Four North American Legends* | 4:25

❼ *Elegie, Op. 30* | 6:22

EUGÈNE ARCADE DÉDÉ (1867-1919)

❽ *Bees and Bumblebees (Abeilles et Bourdons), Op. 562* | 4:33

ARTHUR FOOTE (1853-1937)

❾ *Air* | 5:08

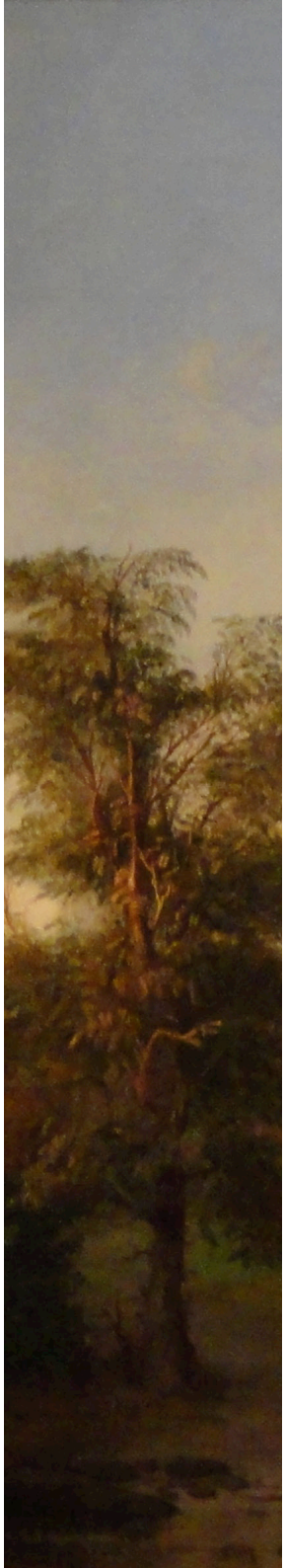
❿ *Gavotte* | 3:22

FREDERICK SHEPHERD CONVERSE (1871-1940)

⓫ *Serenade* | 2:57

HENRY SCHOENEFELD (1857-1936)

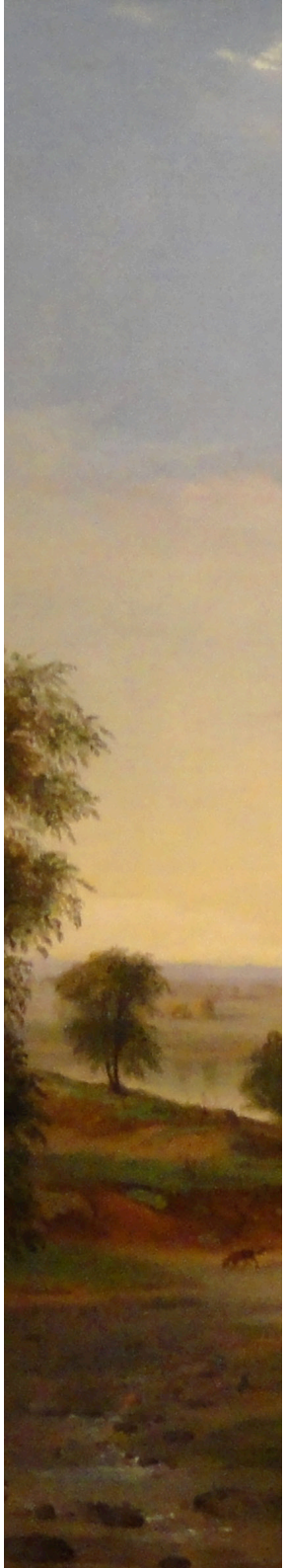
⓬ *Scherzo* FROM *Characteristic Suite, Op. 15* | 4:51



CARL BUSCH
(1862–1943)

Omaha Indian Love Song & Chippewa Lullaby, from Four North American Legends; Elegie, Op. 30 | Taught by two of its founders, Nils Gade and Johan Hartmann, Carl Busch attended the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen. He would have known Carl Nielsen, three years his junior. Continuing his musical studies in Brussels and Paris, Busch moved to the United States in 1887, settling in Kansas City, among about 2,000 other Danes. Busch conducted various Kansas City orchestras, including the first Kansas City Symphony, from 1911–18. As well as guest conducting across the USA and Europe, he composed works for orchestra (suites, rhapsodies, symphonic poems), woodwind ensembles, and bands. Many pieces took melodic inspiration from Native American melodies, such as his 1914 *Minnehaha's Vision*. The four pieces that form the "*Indian Tribal Melodies (Four North American Legends)*," were drawn from a pamphlet of Native American music, prepared by the US Department of the Interior in 1913. The present recording includes two of these, dedicated to and premiered by Emil Oberhoffer, Music Director of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra (now Minnesota Orchestra). The earlier piece, *Elegie*, was published in 1899 and dedicated to a Mr. Weber.

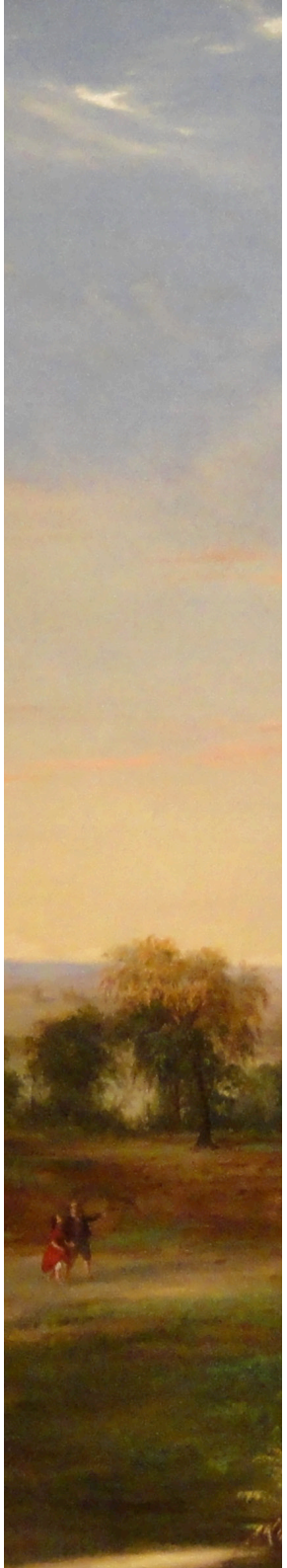
Busch's longest appointment was teaching at the University of Kansas City, but he also taught at the University of Chicago, Notre Dame, and Interlochen: his students include Robert Russell Bennett (of famed Broadway arrangements) and William Dawson. Honors bestowed included knighthoods from Denmark and Norway.



PAUL FRIEDRICH THEODOR MIERSCH
(1868–1956)

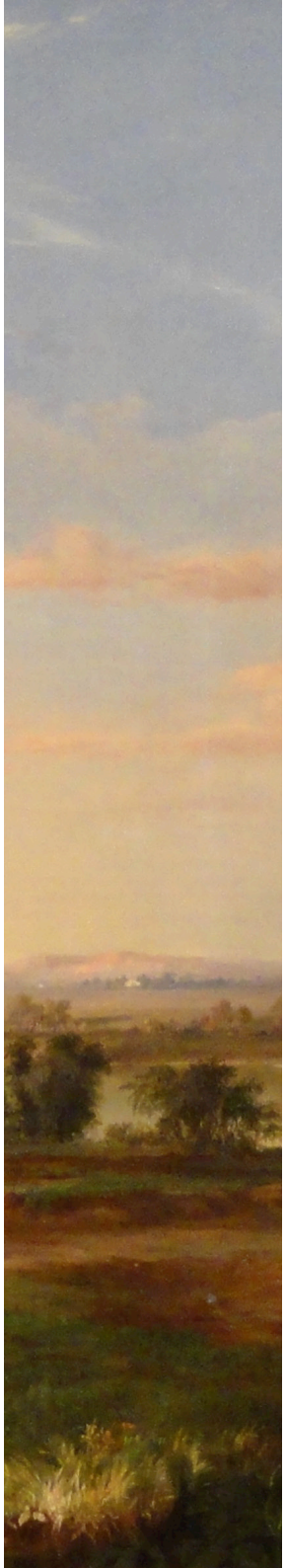
Pleasant memories | Born in Dresden, and after studies at the Royal Academy in Munich (with Josef Rheinberger for composition, and Joseph Werner for cello), Paul Miersch spent three years in Washington D.C. After returning to Germany to play in the 1891 Bayreuth Festival under Anton Seidl, he settled in New York, performing variously with several orchestras (including the Philharmonic, where Seidl had just replaced Theodore Thomas). For five years Miersch was principal cellist of the New York Symphony Orchestra, with a break in 1894 to tour internationally in a quartet with stellar American violinist Maude Powell; the quartet continued concertizing for four years after this. From 1899 he was principal cellist in the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, where he was often a featured soloist in their "American Night" benefit concerts – he conducted his Norse Legend once, in 1904. In later life, Miersch lived in Yorkville, the German enclave on New York's Upper East Side.

Miersch's compositions include an *Indian Rhapsody* for orchestra (based on melodies of the Ute tribe of Colorado/Utah), concertos for violin and for cello, a string quartet, and songs or smaller works for chamber groups. One imagines he composed the cello solo, in the Trio of this piece, for himself. (It's played here by Julian Schwarz.)



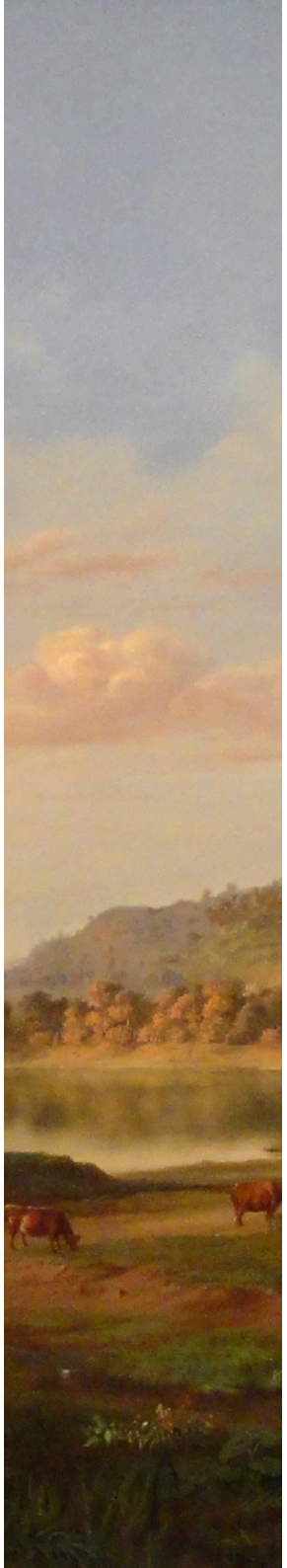
LUDWIG BONVIN
(1850–1939)

Christmas Night's Dream, Op. 10 | Born in Sierre, Switzerland (close to a Mount Bonvin), Ludwig Bonvin first studied medicine in Vienna, returning to Switzerland for legal studies. Moving to Holland to study theology, he was ordained as a Jesuit priest in England aged 35. Traveling to New York, he finally settled in Buffalo, NY, taking a job at the Jesuit Canesius High School and later College. He conducted the College's choir, founded their orchestra, and was an active writer. His topics included early church music, and liberalizing church music policy to allow women to sing in church choirs. During his 52 years teaching, he produced a number of choral and orchestral works—the Buffalo Philharmonic performed two works in the 1930s. Bonvin's music sounds late-nineteenth century and Germanic, influenced by Wagnerian harmonies. *Christmas Night's Dream* includes the German Christmas carol *Born in Bethlehem*, and before Bonvin arranged it for strings, it formed the first of his *Three Tone Poems for Organ*, Op. 8.



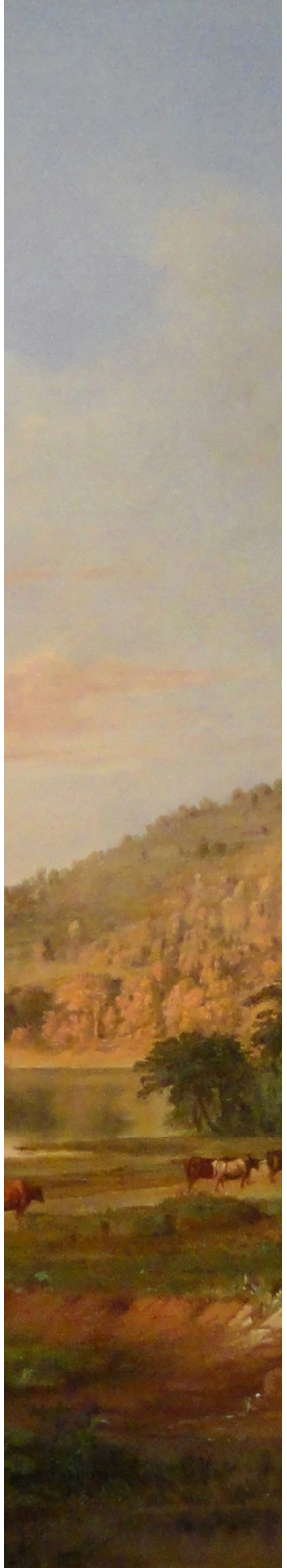
CARL HILLMANN
(1867–1955)

Wiegenlied/Lullaby, Op. 21 | Born in Frankfurt, at age 26 Hillman became principal second violin of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Theodore Thomas, in the orchestra's third season. Hillmann would spend the next decade further back in the section. Under Music Director Frederick Stock, he returned to principal second, then the first violins, and finally the viola section for his last two years in the orchestra: an unusual orchestral career. At the same time, he was publishing a large number of works for chamber ensembles (and some for orchestra) with Johann André (a Frankfurt publishing house)—a final count of at least fifty. Additionally, he taught violin and chamber music. He was active outside the CSO, too—Chicago's *Musical News* reviewed his 1915 performance in a small ensemble for Gluck's *Orpheus* as "a musically delightful reading of the score."



HORATIO PARKER
(1863–1919)

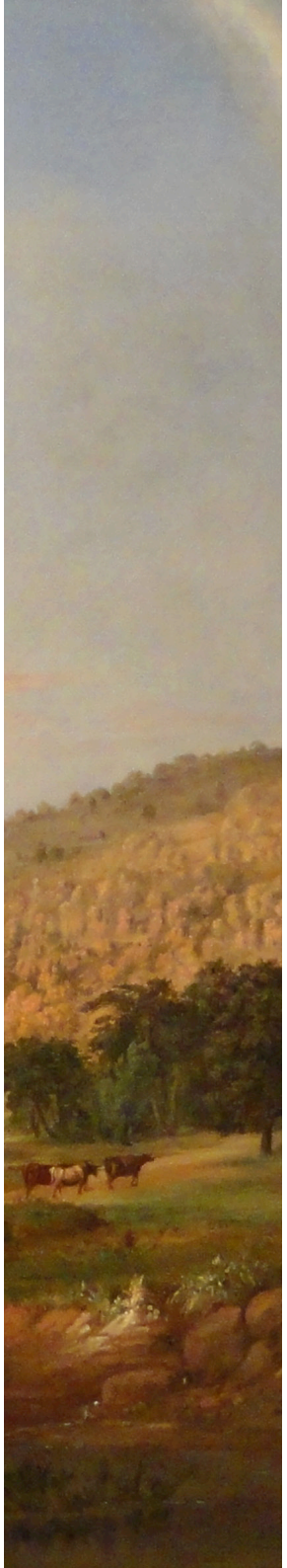
Scherzo for Strings | Originally from Newton, MA, Horatio Parker's teachers in Boston included fellow Second New England School member, George Chadwick (1854–1931). Following Chadwick's lead, Parker studied in Munich at the Royal Academy with organist-composer Rheinberger. Returning to the United States, he taught briefly in New York at the National Conservatory of Music under Dvořák's lead, as well as at St. Paul's School in Long Island and elsewhere in New York and Boston. He joined the nascent Yale School of Music in 1894, serving as Dean from 1904 until his death in 1919. During his career, he occupied a succession of church music director/organist positions (frequently in a different city to his teaching position). Parker was founder of the New Haven Symphony, which he conducted from 1895–1918. Parker's students included Charles Ives, Quincy Porter, and Roger Sessions.



EUGÈNE ARCADE DÉDÉ
(1867–1919)

Abeilles et Bourdons (Bees and Bumblebees), op. 562 | Eugène Dédé's father, Edmond, was born in New Orleans in 1827, the son of immigrants from the French West Indies. After studies in Mexico (1848) and career obstacles under the antebellum segregation of New Orleans, Edmond left the USA, studying at the Paris Conservatory from 1857. In France, Edmond built a successful career conducting and composing, associating with composers including Adolphe Adam, Halévy, and Gounod. He married the Frenchwoman Sylve Leflat in 1864, and their son, Eugène Arcade Dédé was born in 1867.

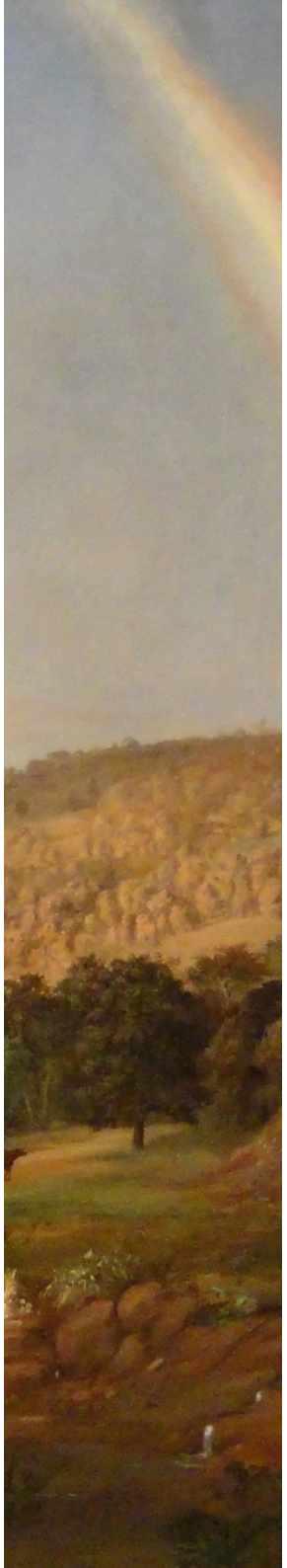
Eugène Dédé became a conductor and composer like his father. His output was prolific—the opus number for *Bees and Bumblebees* alone is 562, and the Bibliotheque National de France collection includes over 200 published compositions, from *Sentimental Mazurka* for piano (1886, when he was 21) to a song, *Bebert de la Glazier* (1919, the year he died). His oeuvre also includes many orchestral works.



ARTHUR FOOTE
(1853–1937)

Air and Gavotte | Aged 14, Arthur Foote enrolled in theory class at New England Conservatory (near his home in Salem, MA) entering Harvard three years later. Unlike most of his compatriots, his formal studies were entirely American—his Masters in Music degree (also from Harvard) was the first graduate degree in music granted in the United States. The following summer (1875) found Foote attending Wagner's first Bayreuth Festival, making contact with countless significant musicians—one of eight European trips over twenty years. He held church positions, including Boston's First Unitarian Church (1878–1910), and privately, taught composition and organ: he was an American Guild of Organists co-founder. With Walter Spalding, he wrote *Modern Harmony in its Theory and Practice* (1905), and his honors included election to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

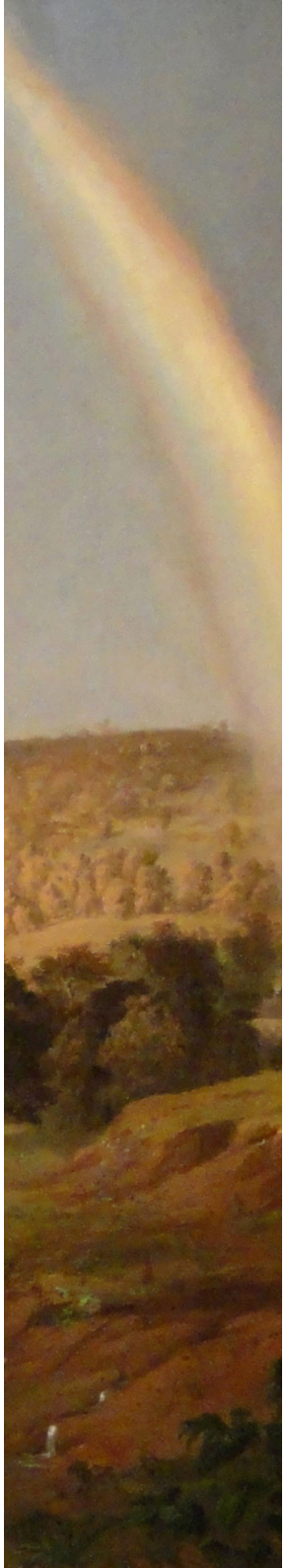
Foote's music is Romantic in style, melodically and harmonically expressive and occasionally reminiscent of Elgar or Grieg. The *Air and Gavotte* are performed here in their later revision: they were originally the second and fifth movements of his Serenade for Strings, dedicated to Henry Lee Higginson (1834–1919), the businessman-philanthropist founder of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.



FREDERICK SHEPHERD CONVERSE
(1871–1940)

Serenade | As a Harvard undergraduate, Converse studied with Second New England School composer John Knowles Paine. After a short and unhappy period in business at his father's urging, he continued his musical studies for two years in Munich with organist and composer Josef Rheinberger. Aside from Horatio Parker, George Chadwick and Paul Miersch, Rheinberger's pupils included Wilhelm Furtwängler, Engelbert Humperdinck, and Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari.

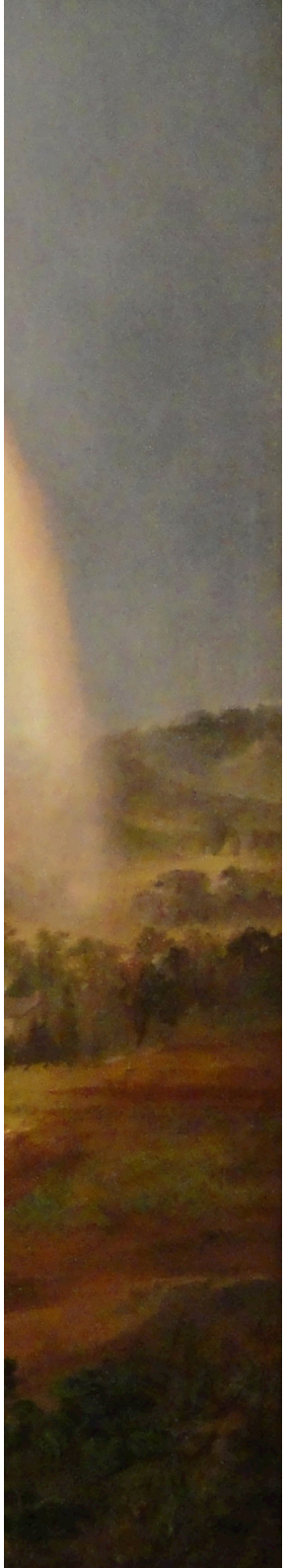
Returning to Boston in 1898, Converse established himself as a composer and teacher, first privately, then at the New England Conservatory and Harvard. The Serenade is a simple yet moving piece, probably from 1903. Its composition was followed by his the 20-minute Straussian tone-poem after Walt Whitman, *The Mystic Trumpeter*, and 1905 opera *The Pipe of Desire*, the first American work performed by the Metropolitan Opera in New York.



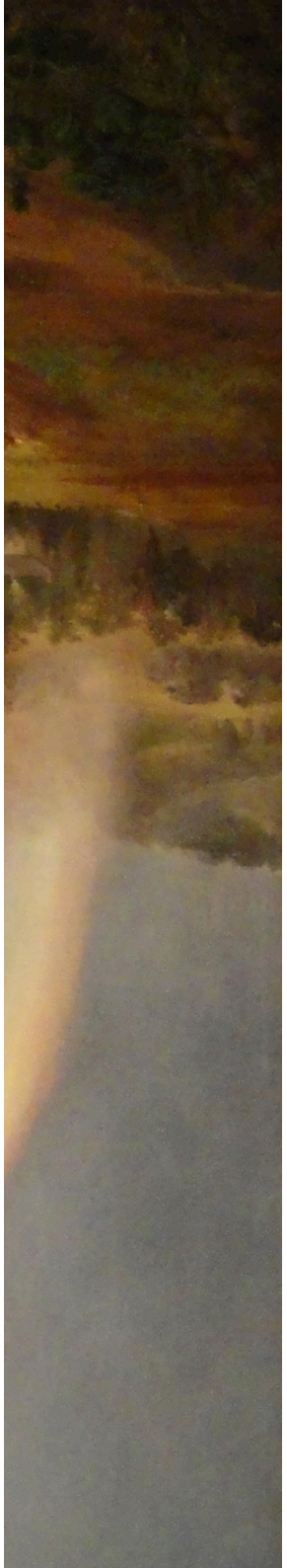
HENRY SCHOENEFELD
(1857–1936)

Scherzo, from Characteristic Suite, Op. 15 | Schoenefeld was born into a musical family in Milwaukee, WI, learning violin and piano from his father and brother. After four years studying at the Leipzig Conservatory with Carl Reinecke among others, he moved to Chicago, where his music drew the interest of Chicago Symphony Orchestra director Theodore Thomas. Like many of his pieces, the *Characteristic Suite* (probably composed in 1891) drew on minstrelsy and African-American idioms, and later works also drew on Native American music.

This Scherzo, the Suite's Finale, is an energetic *moto perpetuo*, especially for the violins, punctuated by laconic interludes. The Suite was a popular addition to the "American Composers Concerts" across Germany in 1892. Reporting an anecdote from the Dresden performance, The Chicago *Evening News* wrote that Anton Rubenstein "clapped his hands after the performance of Schoenefeld's Suite, and loudly ejaculated: 'Now, that I like,' … Mr. Schoenefeld is immensely tickled by the news." In other critical acclaim, Antonin Dvořák selected his *Rural Symphony* for first place (and $500) in the 1893 competition offered by the National Conservatory of Music. After 25 years in Chicago, in 1904, Schoenefeld moved to Los Angeles, teaching at the University of California—his students included Roy Harris (1898–1979).



These pieces were provided by the Edwin A. Fleisher Collection of Orchestral Music at the Free Library of Philadelphia. The Fleisher Collection is the world's largest lending library of orchestral performance material, lending to performing organizations worldwide. Alongside virtually the entire standard repertoire, it houses many rare and out-of-print works, with a current collection of over 22,000 titles and growing.



RECORDED AT Peter Karl Studios in the Gowanus Arts Building, June 6 & 7, 2014.

PRODUCER/EDITOR: Dag Gabrielsen

ENGINEER: Peter Karl

POST-PRODUCTION ADVISOR: Dan Lippel

MASTERING: Zach Herchen

EDITOR: Zach Herchen

ORCHESTRA MANAGER: Matthew Beaumont

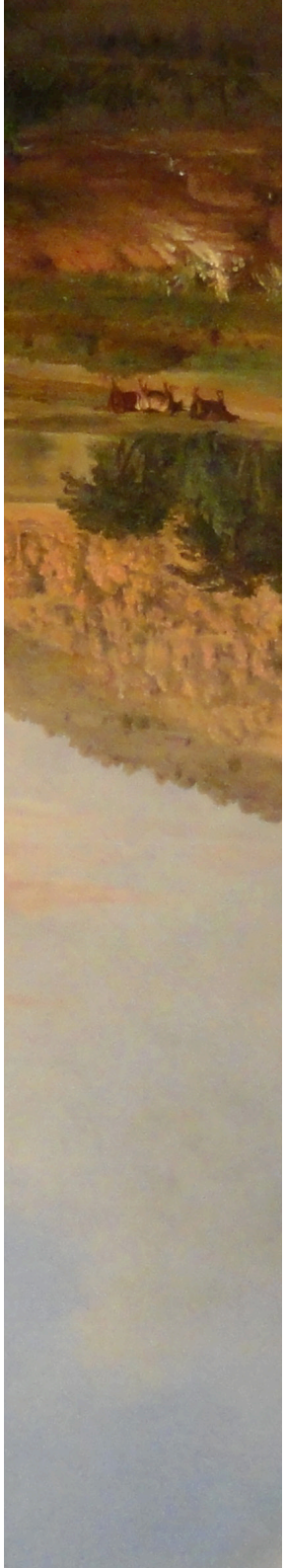
PROGRAM NOTES: Reuben Blundell

GRAPHIC DESIGN: Bloomsday Design

ARTWORK: Robert Seldon Duncanson, "Landscape with Rainbow"

INVALUABLE ASSISTANCE of my friends and colleagues at the Fleisher Collection: Stu Serio, Gary Galván, & Abu Tilghman.

SPECIAL THANKS to Hunter College President Jennifer J. Raab, Dean Andrew Polsky, and the Hunter College Music Department, including Chairs Paul Mueller & Suzanne Farrin.



THE GOWANUS ARTS ENSEMBLE

VIOLINS	Hiroko Taguchi
	Orlando Wells
	Yuiko Kamakari
	Elizabeth Nielsen
	Sarah Zun
VIOLAS	Entela Barci
	Carla Fabiani
CELLI	Julian Schwarz
	Alisa Horn
BASS	Rick Ostrovsky

CONDUCTOR REUBEN BLUNDELL directs the Hunter Symphony, at Hunter College, where is an Assistant Professor, also conducting the Wind Ensemble, String Ensemble, Chamber Music, and teaching violin. In Philadelphia, he is Music Director of the Lansdowne Symphony Orchestra, and is Principal Conductor with the Riverside Orchestra in New York, regularly conducting and playing violin in the Chelsea Symphony. He lives with his wife, oboist Karen Birch Blundell, daughter Elizabeth, and their cat, Gracy, in Upstate Manhattan.

CARL BUSCH (1862-1943)

1. *Omaha Indian Love Song* FROM *Four North American Legends* | 6:08

PAUL MIERSCH (1868-1956)

2. *Pleasant memories (Gais Souvenirs)—Pizzicato Caprice pour Instruments à cordes* | 2:06

LUDWIG BONVIN (1850-1939)

3. *Christmas Night's Dream (Christnachtstraum), Op. 10* | 4:22

CARL HILLMAN (1867-1955)

4. *Lullaby (Wiegenlied), Op. 21* | 2:21

HORATIO PARKER (1863-1919)

5. *Scherzo, for Strings* | 5:15

CARL BUSCH (1862-1943)

6. *Chippewa Lullaby* FROM *Four North American Legends* | 4:25
7. *Elegie, Op. 30* | 6:22

EUGÈNE ARCADE DÉDÉ (1867-1919)

8. *Bees and Bumblebees (Abeilles et Bourdons), Op. 562* | 4:33

ARTHUR FOOTE (1853-1937)

9. *Air* | 5:08
10. *Gavotte* | 3:22

FREDERICK SHEPHERD CONVERSE (1871-1940)

11. *Serenade* | 2:57

HENRY SCHOENEFELD (1857-1936)

12. *Scherzo* FROM *Characteristic Suite, Op. 15* | 4:51

FCR 166 DDD
NEWFOCUSRECORDINGS.COM
©2015 Reuben Blundell
6 00116 68662 6